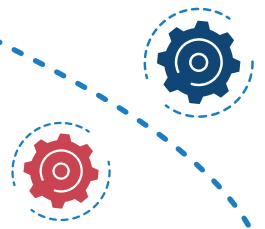




LABOR OBSERVATORY OF THE AMERICAS



Country Profile United States of America



2021



Total Area:

9,833,517 km²



Population (2020 Census):

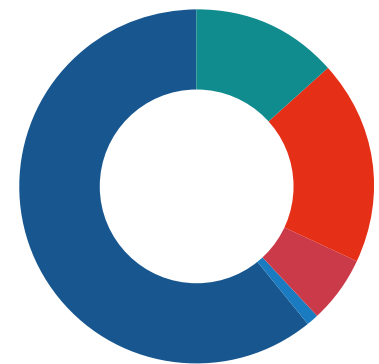
331,449,281 people¹



Population (2021):

332,402,978 people

Population composition



13,4% Black or African American (46,900,000 people)

18,5% Hispanic and Latino (62,100,000 people)

5,9% Asian (24,000,000 people)

1,3% American Indian and Alaska Native (9,700,000 people)

60,1% on-Hispanic White (204,300,000 people)



Economically active population:

(December 2021)

162,294,000 people²



Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020:

20.89 trillion US dollars³



GDP in 2021:

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reports that the GDP increased by 2.3% in the third quarter of 2021⁴.

¹ Most of the statistics noted here were drawn from the United States Census Bureau (US CENSUS BUREAU) and its most recent publications. Other verifiable information was obtained from official agencies that are referenced as appropriate.

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t01.htm>

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2020&locations=US&start=1960&view=chart>

⁴ <https://www.bea.gov/news/2021/gross-domestic-product-third-estimate-gdp-industry-and-corporate-profits-revised-3rd>



Analysis of socio-economic situation

Employment.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the employment rate for December 2021 was 61.9%, with 155,975,000 employed persons. The employment rate was 55.7% for women and 67.4% for men.

Economically Inactive Population.

99,842,000 people.

Unemployment.

The unemployment rate for December 2021 was estimated at 3.9%, equivalent to 6,319,000 people.

Poverty.

The official poverty rate in 2020 was 11.4%, approximately 37,200,000 people.



Context Highlights 2021

The United States ended the year as the country with the highest number of Covid-19 deaths in the world, exceeding 830,000. The first months of 2021 had a notable decrease in the indicators that show the impact of the virus: number of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. Although by February 2021 the number of reported cases decreased by 57%, hospitalizations by 16%, and deaths by 3.5%, by the end of the year the country reported the highest peak in infections during the entire pandemic: 488,000 per day.

The rapid advances in vaccination delivery enabled broad access. By the end of the year, 514 million doses had been administered, and 205 million people (61.7% of the population) had been completely vaccinated. The ramp-up in the process was particularly noticeable during the first months of Joe Biden's presidency, who took office on January 20.

Faced with defeat in the elections, Donald Trump used his presidential office to create confusion and tension by raising suspicions of electoral fraud based on increased mail-in and early voting, practices that grew significantly during the pandemic, surpassing 100 million votes.

Biden's inauguration took place in a context of acute political and social polarization, evident in the 6 January violent takeover of the Capitol by hundreds of Trump supporters and sympathizers. Protesters rejected the elections results and attempted to have them annulled by storming the Capitol and instigating a confrontation with law enforcement officers responsible for protecting them building. The assault involved various sectors that share a right-wing ideology with clear fascist overtones: racist and armed extreme right-wing militias; sympathizers of the QAnon conspiracy theory led by Jake Angeli, better known as "Yellowstone Wolf"; and members of "Stop the Steal", a large group uses social

media to promote white supremacy and extreme violence. The confrontation left five people dead and several injured.

There political agenda of the last elections – which would mark the trajectory in 2021 – featured several hot topics. Among them, the economic and social impact of the pandemic; the protests after the 2020 murder of African-American citizen George Floyd at the hands of the police; public health policies (unlike other industrialized countries, the US has no universal health coverage); migration; and reestablishing trade and economic relations with other countries.

Biden focused his discourse on human rights and democracy, highlighting the importance of addressing and curbing the pandemic, boosting the economy, taking action on the climate crisis, and the need for immigration reform. One year into his administration, some of these proposals have not shown significant progress, which has led to a decline in Biden's approval ratings among US citizens.

One of the main criticisms of the government relates to the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, which generated domestic and international discontent, blaming the government for the social and human rights crisis created by the Taliban after the departure of 2,500 US military personnel. The absence of an immediate reform to address migration is also a point for criticism; there were more than 1.7 million arrests at the border in 2021, more than triple the average number of annual border arrests between 2012 and 2020. There is also dissatisfaction regarding the management of the economy and inflation, since the cost of living in the United States increased by 7% in 2021.



Actions/Denunciations (national and international) by Trade Unions and other social sectors

Union organizations denounced Starbucks for threats, intimidation, and surveillance of workers at three locations in Buffalo, in response to employees' attempts to organize. The organizing process began in August, when 128 people working at three of the company's facilities applied to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to begin unionizing. From that moment on, Starbucks launched actions aimed at thwarting the request, in a clear violation of the workers' rights. The union movement has pointed out that Starbucks is not the only company carrying out this type of resistance to unionization, explicitly mentioning similar situations in Amazon warehouses in New York State and Alabama.

Another major denunciation concerned the strike that began in early October at Kellogg's, which resulted in a vote by workers to ratify their labor contract at four US breakfast cereal plants. The contract covers approximately 1,400 workers represented by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union at plants in Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. The approved package includes cost-of-living adjustments and a \$1.10 per hour increase for all employees. The AFL-CIO hailed the end of the strike, following the vote and ratification of the contract, as a victory for the workers, commending their steadfastness in the process. Union members frequently stressed that the strike was triggered, among other reasons, by the two-tier wage system

imposed by the company where newer workers are paid less and receive fewer benefits. This wage system were a point of friction even during negotiations for the end of the strike. Moreover, it is important to note that Kellogg's attempted to keep its plants in operation with temporary workers, and threatened to hire permanent replacements, which would constitute a flagrant violation of the collective bargaining process.

Meanwhile, delegates from US social movements and trade unions that participated in the 26th Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) held in Glasgow, Scotland, denounced the resounding failure of the climate negotiations. In particular, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the alliances that Global North built with transnational corporations to eliminate any responsibility for the climate damage they cause, their strategies to obstruct the protection of human rights, and their support for carbon offset schemes that are based on false market solutions. US social movements also denounced COP 26's focus on "net zero emissions", which is a roadmap to ensure the economic accumulation of fossil fuel corporations that will continue to profit from the financialization of nature and territorial control for oil, gas, and coal exploitation, while increasing the dangers to people and the planet.



Trade union proposals and initiatives

In line with the concerns about the positions of the Global North countries in the face of a climate crisis – which is creating ever greater catastrophes and impacts on the rights of peoples and their human rights – the trade union movement and social movements and organizations demand that the US government create a participatory roadmap to end the expansion of fossil fuel extraction. As a starting point, the US government should declare a climate emergency, focus on reducing emissions at the source, and invest in the cre-

ation of real solutions driven by popular grassroots political subjects and based on their emancipatory proposals. Building proposals and ensuring their implementation entails the US taking strong measures to curb the expansion of fossil fuels, prevent the use of public lands for developing mining-energy and agro-industrial extractivism, and stop the opening of new pipelines.



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